

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-20 EB-08 COME-00
SIL-01 LAB-04 HA-05 DEAE-00 SNM-05 ACDA-12 L-03
AID-05 AGRE-00 MCT-01 CA-01 /119 W
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R 122222Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1354
ALL USCONS MEXICO POUCH

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, EGEN, SHUM, MX

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S PRESS CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY: ON JUNE 28 PRESIDENT JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE WITH FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS AT LOS PINOS. HE COVERED SUCH MATTERS AS THE MEXICAN ECONOMY, U.S./MEXICAN RELATIONS, UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS, U.S./MEXICAE, HUMAN RIGHTS, DRUGS AND CUBA. PRINCIPAL POINTS FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. BESIDES EVALUATING HIS 18-MONTH-OLD ADMINISTRATION, JLP STATED THAT THE PESO WOULD NOT UNDERGO ANOTHER DEVALUATION "BECAUSE IT HAS NO FIXED PARITY." HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT INFLATION HAS GREATLY BEEN REDUCED AND THAT THE FLOW OF CAPITAL OUT OF THE COUNTRY HAS CEASED. JLP, NEVERTHELESS, ADMITTED THAT THERE WERE STILL A FEW PROBLEMS TO BE OVERCOME BUT, IN WHAT HE CALLED A "CAUTIOUS PREDICTION", HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY WOULD BE "CONSOLIDATED" AFTER THE PRESENT "SUMMER CRISIS" THAT THE COUNTRY IS GOING THROUGH.

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3. ON DISARMAMENT, JLP SAID THAT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE PEACE IT WAS NECESSARY TO ALSO OBTAIN "ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL ORDER THAT WOULD ALLOW FOR THE SOLUTION OF SUBSTANTIAL SURVIVAL PROBLEMS FOR THOSE COUNTRIES WITH A MINIMUM SUBSISTENCE."

4. ON U.S./MEXICAN RELATIONS: REGARDING RELATIONS BETWEEN

MEXICO AND THE U.S., JLP IS QUOTED AS SAYING "RELATIONS HAVE NOT COOLED; ON THE CONTRARY, RELATIONS HAVE REACHED A SATISFACTORY LEVEL BECAUSE THEY ARE FOUNDED ON (THE NECESSARY) TOOLS WITH WHICH TO ANALYZE OUR PROBLEMS." JLP WAS ASKED IF "THE SPECTACULAR DEPARTURE OF THE U.S. AMBASSADOR FOR HIS COUNTRY WAS AN INDICATION THAT THERE WAS A GROWING TENSION BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES." HE ANSWERED, "APPEARANCES ARE DECEIVING AND ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT NECESSARILY SPECTACULAR...THE RELATIONS BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES ARE EXCELLENT. I HAVE JUST GREETED MR. CARTER IN PANAMA. OUR RELATIONS ARE SATISFACTORY."

5. ON UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS: "THIS IS ONE OF THE RECURRENT TOPICS IN U.S./MEXICAN RELATIONS. THE SOLUTION, FOR US, LIES IN THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR ECONOMY." HE REITERATED THAT "MEXICO WOULD LIKE TO EXPORT GOODS, NOT LABOR; THAT IS WHY WE PRESENTED MR. CARTER WITH A PACKAGE PLAN." "WE COULD EXPORT MANY PRODUCTS TO THE UNITED STATES, BUT THIS IS EITHER PREVENTED BY THE DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OR BY OUR INABILITY TO PRODUCE. IN ANY CASE, THE REAL SOLUTION LIES IN THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR ECONOMY AND THE CREATION OF JOBS IN MEXICO, IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE ADVENTURE (OF LOOKING FOR JOBS IN THE U.S.) BECOMES UNDESIRABLE." HE ADDED, "AS LONG AS THERE IS A DEMAND FOR WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES, FOR LABOR FOR A CERTAIN TYPE OF ACTIVITIES, FOR A POPULATION THAT HAS UNEMPLOYMENT

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INSURANCE, THE PATH WILL BE ROUGH." HE REITERATED MEXICO'S POSITION THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT CONFUSE IMMIGRATION RIGHTS WITH LABOR OR HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. ON DRUGS: "AS LONG AS THERE IS A DEMAND FOR LABOR AND FOR DRUGS IN THE UNITED STATES, LABOR AND DRUGS WILL FLOW THROUGH THE OBSCURE PATHS OF ECONOMIC LAWS. THE MOMENT THAT THERE IS NO DEMAND FOR EITHER LABOR OR DRUGS IN OUR NEIGHBORING COUNTRY, THERE WILL BE NONE. THERE IS NO OTHER SOLUTION: THESE ARE RULES THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, WE CANNOT AVOID."

7. REGARDING FIDEL CASTRO'S VISIT, JLP SAID, "THERE IS AN OPEN POSSIBILITY, A MUTUAL WISH, AS FAR AS I KNOW, BUT NOTHING CONCRETE SO FAR." ON U.S./CUBAN RELATIONS, JLP SAID THAT MEXICO WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BUT THAT NEITHER SIDE HAD REQUESTED MEXICAN ASSISTANCE.

8. DISCUSSING THE ECONOMY, HE SAID THE PRIMARY GOALS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION WERE TO INCREASE ENERGY AND AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION, AND THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE FIRST BUT

NOT THE LATTER. HE DESCRIBED THE AGRICULTURAL PROBLEM AS ONE OF ORGANIZATION, AND PROMISED THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION WOULD SOLVE LAND TENURE PROBLEMS AND END THE DIVISION OF LAND. JLP ALSO SAID MEXICO'S PETRODOLLARS WOULD BE DIRECTED AT CREATING JOBS AND MEETING ITS AGRICULTURAL REQUIREMENTS.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS: IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION WHICH CITED THE KILLING OF A YOUTH BY POLICE IN MATAMOROS AS AN EXAMPLE OF INCREASING REPRESSION, LOPEZ PORTILLO SAID THE MATAMOROS INCIDENT WAS CAUSED BY IRRESPONSIBLE POLICEMEN AND THAT IT WAS BEING INVESTIGATED. HE ADDED THAT THERE WERE NO CLANDESTINE PRISONS IN THE COUNTRY. JLP SAID HE REJECTED WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED REPRESSION IN MEXICO AND SAID,
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"I WOULD CALL IT THE USE OF PUBLIC FORCE, WHICH IS LEGITIMATE IN OUR SYSTEM." RESPONDING TO A RELATED QUESTION ON THE APPARENT INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN HIS EFFORTS TO RESTORE FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT AND ABUSES COMMITTED BY THE POLICE AND SOLDIERS, JLP SAID HE REJECTED THE IDEA THAT THE ARMY HAD COMMITTED ABUSES. HE NOTED THAT TERRORISM IN MEXICO CAUSED UNDESIRABLE CONFRONTATIONS, BUT THAT THESE WERE NOT ABUSES BY THE MILITARY. HE ADDED

THAT THE POLICE IN MEXICO, LIKE THOSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES, SOMETIMES COMMIT EXCESSES, WHICH HE QUALIFIED AS A HUMAN CONDITION. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING ABUSES BY POLICE HE SAID, "THE IMPORTANT THING IS THE LEGAL STRUCTURE THAT MAINTAINS THE POSSIBILITY OF DEFENSE OF THESE RIGHTS AND THAT THIS IS OPEN IN OUR COUNTRY." HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE ABUSES OF AUTHORITY OCCUR IN A NORMATIVE SYSTEM WITH THE CAPACITY TO CORRECT THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT STRUCTURAL. ON A SEPARATE QUESTION REGARDING EX-PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA HECTOR CAMPORA, JLP SAID THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT STILL INSISTS ON ASYLUM AND EXPATRIATION FOR CAMPORA AND CONSIDERS THE ARGENTINE POSITION ONE OF TEMPORARY REFUSAL. EARLIER DURING THE INTERVIEW HE HAD SAID THAT THE PROJECT OF AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN MEXICO IS DELAYED BECAUSE OF AN INCREASE IN TERRORISM. LUCEY UNCLASSIFIED

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